



Israel's Laughable History of Predicting the Iran Atomic Bomb

For long Israel has claimed it reserves the right of “self defense” against the Islamic Republic of Iran, due to its claims of a secretive Iranian nuclear weapons program. Yet the very government consistently claiming to have insider information on the topic — information that all the world’s reputable organizations and watchdogs say they have no knowledge of — has been wildly off base with its predictions, to say the least.

Avigdor Leiberman, Israel’s finance minister, [says that](#) “with [A Nuclear Agreement] or without an agreement, Iran will be a nuclear state and have a nuclear weapon within five years, tops.” This is a far cry [from the predictions this January](#) by the IDF’s Chief of Staff, Aviv Kochavi, who warned that Iran could have a nuclear bomb in “months, maybe even weeks”. But these sorts of alarmist predictions, which turn out to be untrue and are quickly revised, are simply the tip of the ice-berg in a long history of false claims. In October, 1992, former Israeli President Shimon Peres warned “the international community that Iran would be armed with a nuclear bomb by 1999”, in a France 3 television interview. This seemed to be at least one of [the first claims in a long line to come](#).

1995: In January of 1995, the New York Times reported that “Iran is much closer to producing nuclear weapons than previously thought, and could be less than five years away from having an atomic bomb, several senior American and Israeli officials say.” Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [also stated in his book](#), *Fighting Terrorism*, that “The best estimates at this time place Iran between three and five years away from possessing the prerequisites required for the independent production of nuclear weapons.”

1996: “On February 15, 1996, Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak told members of the UN Security Council that Iran would be able to produce nuclear weapons within eight years.” This was according to Barak’s comments recorded in the book *Treacherous Alliance*.

In April of that same year, then Israeli PM Shimon Peres told ABC TV: “I believe that in four years they [Iran] may reach nuclear weapons”.

1999: In November of 1999, the Associated Press (AP) reported that “Unless the United States pressures Russia to end its military assistance to Iran, the Islamic republic will possess a nuclear capability within five years, a senior Israeli military official said Sunday.”

2001: In July 2001, then Israeli Defence Minister, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, stated before reporters that “As far as we know by the year 2005 they [Iran] will, they might, be ready.”

2003: According to the Jerusalem Post, a high-ranking Israeli military official told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee that “Iran will have the materials needed to make a nuclear bomb by 2004 and will have an operative nuclear weapons program by 2005,” this comment was reported to have taken place in August of 2003.

2009: “Unless their programme experiences technical problems, the Iranians will have by 2014 a bomb ready to be used, which would represent a concrete threat for Israel,” stated Mossad chief, Meir Dagan, in June of 2009. In that same month, Wikileaks cables revealed that former Israeli PM, Ehud Barak, claimed that the international community only had a 6-18 month period to stop Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon.

In November, “General Baidatz argued that it would take Iran one year to obtain a nuclear weapon and two and a half years to build an arsenal of three weapons.” This was according to a WikiLeaks cable.

2010: According to Jeffrey Goldberg, reporting for the Atlantic, in September of 2010; “The reasoning offered by Israeli decision makers was uncomplicated: Iran is, at most, one to three years away from having a breakout nuclear capability (often understood to be the capacity to assemble more than one missile-ready nuclear device within about three months of deciding to do so).”

These were just some of the predictions made, up to 2010, but it did not stop there. Perhaps the most well known and persistent drivers of the alleged Iranian conspiracy to acquire nuclear weapons has been former Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

Netanyahu has quite literally been [wrongly predicting an Iranian bomb for the past 29 years](#), making a prediction that Tehran would have the weapon within 5 years or less.

The first known claim made by Netanyahu came in 1992, when he told the Israeli Knesset that Iran was “three to five years” away from reaching nuclear weapons capabilities.

In 2012, Benjamin Netanyahu warned the international community in a performance in which he held up graphics of a cartoon bomb and claimed the Islamic Republic was about “[a year away](#)” from acquiring the weapon. A claim later revealed, in a 2015 leaked cable, to contradict the assessments made by Israeli Mossad. Needless to say, Iran didn’t acquire the bomb and somehow Israel’s credibility remained in tact.

Then we have the predictions made in the wake of the Obama-era Nuclear Deal, or JCPOA, which seem to have pushed Israeli politicians into overdrive.

To begin with, on the day the deal was signed in 2015, the New York Times [reported](#) that Israeli Premier Netanyahu had stated to President Obama that Iran would have a nuclear weapon either by waiting the 10-15 year period out or would violate the JCPOA.

After years of Israeli officials voicing their condemnation of the Iran Nuclear agreement, US President Donald Trump decided in May, 2018, to [unilaterally withdraw from the JCPOA](#). Just two weeks prior to this, Israeli PM Netanyahu was at it again with his visual presentations, designed as if he was teaching a class of 12-year-old children.

Netanyahu [claimed that Iran had been lying](#), urging the international community to act and stating that Israel had allegedly uncovered documents proving that Iran had a secret nuclear weapons program.

As pointed out at the start of this article, Israel's military and political establishment also continued on this long legacy of claims this year, contradicting themselves along the way yet again. The nature of these claims have clearly been to serve an agenda of fear mongering in order to justify sanctions, isolationist policies, and even military action against the Islamic Republic. The record is clear, and the examples shown here are only scratching the surface. Both international mainstream media outlets, as well as governments around the world, understand this record. So two questions now remain that we must honestly ask yourselves. First, how many more false predictions are needed for Western leaders and media outlets to stop taking the Israeli claims seriously? Second, could it be that these leaders are working with Israel to justify Western antagonism towards Iran?

-Robert Inlakesh